



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Safe and sound

Pittsburgh native, Staff Sgt. Jason Gailey, a squad leader with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, patrols a neighborhood in Baghdad's Al Doura district Jan. 15. The mission for Gailey's unit was to secure the neighborhood one building at a time, so Iraqi security forces could move in and assume control of the area. See story page 2.

Sheiks attend council meeting at Ahmed Suhel

By Spc. Chris McCann
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

AHMED SUHEL, Iraq - The Sunni men who arrived in the dusty village of Ahmed Suhel hailed from all over the area, tribal leaders and power brokers from all the tribes around Yusufiyah, Iraq. They went into a tent on Patrol Base

Al-Taraq that shaded blanketed tables and sat in near-silence, waiting for the meeting to begin.

The meeting was organized by Maj. Robert Griggs, a native of Stockton, Calif., and the operations officer for the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain

Division (Light Infantry), Lt. Col. Iman of the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Capt. Shane Finn of Clinton, N.Y., commander of Company C, 4-31. The purpose of the meeting was primarily to meet the sheiks and begin building a foundation for security in the area.

"You were not supposed to

be here today," said Griggs. "I was told the Sunni sheiks would never sit down with us. I was told you were all terrorists. But you are all here ... and I see that you are not just Sunni, you are Iraqi."

This was met with nods of

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Strykers sweep neighborhood of insurgency

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq - Room by room, building after building and one block at a time, Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces search neighborhoods in Baghdad. The search is for the tools of the insurgency, such as prohibited firearms and explosive-making materials, which are

used to destabilize the fledgling democracy of this war-torn country.

The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, worked with Iraqi Army troops and national police to clear neighborhoods in Baghdad's Al Doura district Jan. 15-18.

"We went through a neighborhood to try to clear any caches or any bad actors

out of the neighborhood to try to leave it safer than we came," said Capt. Brent Clemmer, commander, Company C, 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Regt. "Hopefully in the end an Iraqi company or battalion will move into that area to take ownership of it after we've made it more safe with our actions."

Clemmer, a native of San Diego, said the mission was a success since prohibited body armor, weapons and explosives were confiscated over the course of the operation.

The life of an Iraqi was even saved. He was the apparent victim of sectarian torture and was found in the course of the operation, Clemmer explained.

"At least we made a difference in one man's life today, because he's not dead and he would have been if we had not gone there," Clemmer said.

The rescue of the Iraqi man and the bodies of five tortured victims confirmed the U.S. Soldiers and ISF have their work cut out for them. The six victims are examples of sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shia in the area, Clemmer said.




"We're trying to make Iraq safe for the people of Iraq - give the Iraqi government and the security forces some breathing room to get themselves together: equipped, trained and turned into a competent force, so they can take (Iraq) over," he said.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Spc. Daniel Adams, with Co. A, 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., pulls security in a building Baghdad's Al Doura district Jan. 15.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Monday
High: 68 Low: 43	High: 66 Low: 41	High: 67 Low: 42	

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NCOIC, Print Production: Staff Sgt. Mary Rose
Editor: Spc. Shea Butler
Staff Writers: Sgt. Michael Garrett, Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. William Hatton
Contributing Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, Spc. Chris McCann

Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

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Sunni Sheiks begin building a foundation for security

Sheik

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approval, and the meeting went on from there, discussing some of the major issues the tribes have - from security to public works projects.

One of the major points of discussion was the detention of the Zobai tribe's sheik, who was photographed by Iraqi soldiers with his shmagh, or traditional headdress, around his shoulders. The sheiks said that this was a sign of disrespect.

"We don't care what he did, to us it's a sign of being shamed," one of the sheiks said.

Griggs explained that the sheikh was detained in a combined operation with the U.S. and Iraqi security forces. He told his guests that he would personally investigate the incident and determine if there was wrong-doing.

"As for the photo," Griggs said, "We will investigate and write our findings in English and Arabic so you can read it. No

one will disrespect another leader while we are here. Even if he is found with an improvised explosive device in his hand, he is still a sheik."

The Zobai sheik's nephew said that he wanted the roads opened, noting that area residents needed to travel to markets and move their herds to other areas.

Iman and Griggs stated that the roads would be opened when they are safe, citing a recent incident in which a man and his five-year-old son were killed by an IED.

"I ask you to meet with the Shia sheiks, and to agree to control your tribes. I am here to get your support for the nahia council," he said. "We would also like to be able to take captured terror suspects to you, so you can tell us if he is good or bad."

"If you bring them, we will tell you their names and all their information," said one.

Griggs said that the U.S. forces were undeterred by the violence in the area.

"The school here is terrible. It's filthy, there are no supplies. We're working on

that. The other day, three of my Soldiers were medically evacuated when eight bombs went off on their vehicle in Carghouli Village," Griggs told the sheiks.

"Today, we're there again, fixing the school. We don't blame Iraqis. We keep helping even when terrorists blow us up," he said.

Griggs said he was pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

"Just getting them to show up was great," he said, though he said he thinks the meeting will bear fruit as well.

"No matter how much the Iraqi army and the coalition forces want to move ahead, the only ones who can make that happen are the civilian leaders," said Griggs. "And here, the civilian leadership is the sheiks."



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

Sheiks meet at Patrol Base Al-Taraq, near Forward Operating Base Yusufiyah, Iraq, Jan. 25 to discuss security, public works and other issues relevant to their communities with leaders from the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Baghdad in Brief

IA troops find rocket launcher during patrol in Radwaniyah

RADWANIYAH, Iraq - Iraqi Army troops seized a homemade rocket launcher east of Radwaniyah, Iraq Jan.31.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division found the weapon in a field during a route clearance operation.

The soldiers reported finding the weapon in a large field pointed in the direction of Route Tampa.

After radioing the finding in to the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) tactical operations center, a military transition team chief was sent out to confirm the finding.

"Finding this weapon proves that the 3rd Battalion is doing extremely well," said Capt. John Sirhal, the fire support officer with the 1-89th. "Their patrolling skills have come a long way since its inception. They are leaps and bounds ahead of where they used to be."

Former small town doc treats troops in Iraq

**By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert
1st ACB, Public Affairs**

TAJI, Iraq - First, do no harm. Then, in your 40s, leave the comforts of small-town life and join the Army.

Lieutenant Col. David Romine, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, followed the example set by his parents, who through lives given to public service, taught their children the importance of giving back to the community.

Now in retirement, his parents continue to donate time to public service as their son, at age 46, continues to serve his country as a brigade surgeon deployed to Iraq.

After a stint as a Naval flight officer immediately after college in the 1980s, the Huntington, W. Va., native completed medical school in 1992 and entered private practice in the poor and medically under-served Mississippi Delta in 1993. The county had only two doctors, and no ambulance service while he practiced there, he said.

From a small town barber shop on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, he watched in horror terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on television.

Early the next year, Romine, then 41, was in the Army doing his part to help with the global fight against terrorism. He joined the Army medical corps as a major, because of a formula based on prior service, his time in private practice and his education level.

"My family has always been supportive, but they were reticent about my joining the Army," he said. "I think they

figured I had already checked that box by serving in the Navy. Since they've met the friends that I've made in the Army, they have seen how we operate and have seen how much I like it. I, now, have their full support."

Although returning to the military meant leaving behind the small communities he had served for nearly a decade, Romine felt he was needed more elsewhere.

"The need to take care of Soldiers trumped everything," Romine said. "They were putting their lives on the line for my family and our country. Having been in aviation previously, I wanted to do aviation medicine."

As the brigade surgeon for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Romine, now calls Houston home, and his team of battalion surgeons, aeromedical physician assistants and medics, play a key role in maintaining the health and physical well being of the pilots and crew members who provide vital air combat support to ground troops in Multinational Division-Baghdad, as well as the maintenance and support Soldiers in the brigade.

"First and foremost is prevention," Romine said. "Flight surgeons strive to help keep aviators flying in peak condition. Crew rest, or fighter management, is a key part of this. So, we work closely with commanders and safety officer to affect our mission."

Although he is treating the aviators and Soldiers in a combat zone, Romine said that, in some ways, providing first-rate care is easier in Iraq - even at a small forward operating base



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Lieutenant Col. David Romine, brigade surgeon for 1st ACB, right, chats with Capt. Stephen Schmidt, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 227th Av. Regt., 1st ACB, Jan. 27 at Taji, Iraq.

like Camp Taji. "Having better access to more medical assets on Taji than I did in the Mississippi Delta, it makes the 10-minute flight to the nearest level three hospital in Baghdad actually a comfort, by comparison, rather than a concern," he said. "It was a 45-minute ride down a two-lane highway in a pickup truck to my hospital in Mississippi."

Romine said there are also some similarities between private practice and his work as the brigade surgeon.

"Though there are obvious differences in the two practice environments, there are also surprising similarities that shouldn't really be so surprising if you think about them," he said. "No matter where we are, who we're with or what mission is in front of us - whether Soldiers or farmers - our patients are humans who have needs to which we in medicine are to be particularly sensitive.

It is the essential element that binds all work in medicine, that of easing suffering, promoting health and meeting each person, where they are, one at a time, as they present to us."

Although he initially planned to return to private practice, he has since decided to make the Army a career.

"On top of everything, along with the deep satisfaction in knowing that I'm helping to take care of the folks who are putting their lives on the line for my family and country, it's the relationships with people of similar commitment to public service - of which my family practices and raised me to do - that has kept me interested in continuing to serve," Romine said.

"The multi-disciplinary environment of the military is something you just don't get in private practice. That's what is keeping me in. I plan to make this a career, and I'm thankful to be able to do so."

Sports columnist takes Tiger, Tiger Woods, y'all

By Pfc. Benjamin Gable
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Tiger season, I mean golf season is finally here. I promise not to be a "Homer" in this article. Yes, Tiger Woods is light years ahead of his competition, but this will be a difficult season for him. He has the pressure of just being Tiger Woods, and he and his wife are expecting their first child this year. When we look back on the 2007 year in golf, though, Tiger will once again not only be on top of the golf world, but the world of sports.

There is no need to fill this sports column with stats and records. We all are very aware that the only competition Tiger faces these days is himself and his driver.

I am one of the lucky ones to have seen Tiger play in person, the final round of the 1997 Masters tournament, to be exact. That is the day, I believe, he took over the golf world for good. As I sat front row beside Ernie Banks behind the par 3 16th hole, I watched golfers parade through all day long. This particular hole has ruined many professional's dreams of winning one of, if not the, most prestigious tournament in golf.

Even though Tiger had the tournament "in the bag," the pros playing for second still were not attacking the pin on the 16th. They were all laying up on the short side of the green for a safe two-put. That is when

it hit me -- these guys are so demoralized by Tiger's huge lead, they just wanted to get out of there. In my opinion, that was the death of anyone believing they had the game to challenge him.

Since then, Tiger has dispatched of most everyone whom has dared share a tee box with him. The PGA has even tried "Tiger proofing" some golf courses, making them longer and narrower. Nothing has worked consistently. The simple truth is; Tiger Woods is on his way to being the

Tiger to be inconsistent for a few short weeks. He has said, however, he plans on playing in every tournament he can this year, and he is feeling more tranquility now than ever before.

While I don't believe he will break the record of eleven straight PGA victories, I do think he will win at least two majors this year. The British Open is a no-brainer. The course sets up perfectly for Tiger. With its wide open fairways and Tiger's shot-making ability in the worst of lies, he should win this tournament by at least five strokes. Tiger knows the Masters tournament is his own personal playground. He has multiple wins there already. Unless a mid-level player makes a serious run, Tiger should win there easily, as well.

The other two majors, the U.S. Open and the PGA Championship are a toss up. I don't believe he can win both of those, but if someone asked if you would take Tiger or the field, you'd better take Tiger. Even with all the so called "big guns" in the field, Tiger will find a way to win one of the two.

If you are not a golf fan, this is the year to become one. Much like Michael Jordan in basketball, Tiger's greatness encompasses all of sports and entertainment.

As good as he has been; he is just now entering his prime. This will no doubt be one of the greatest years of his career, both professionally and personally.

Trigger Pull

Pfc.
Benjamin
Gable



greatest golfer ever to swing a club.

Tiger has won seven straight tournaments up to this day, four short of the record eleven in a row by Byron Nelson in 1945.

The most recent was the first and only tournament he has entered this year, the Buick Invitational. We will be seeing him hoist various trophies throughout the year.

The biggest challenge for Tiger this year will be parenthood. Tiger and his wife are expecting their first child sometime during the middle of the season. Look for

TELEVISION



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AFN prime ATLANTIC	NBC Nightly News	ABC World News with Charles Gibson	The Koala Brothers	Robot Boy	Sonic X	Tutenstein	Sherlock Holmes in te 22nd Century
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